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ABSTRACT

Observing that people are confronted with posters, billboards, video and other images more and more every day, this paper theorizes that the structure and principles of rhetoric can assist the public in understanding how visual images function and affect them. The paper presents a syllabus designed to assist rhetoric instructors in developing methods for teaching the rhetoric of visual images. Activities suggested in the syllabus include (1) lectures on the contemporary theories of K. Burke, R. Weaver, and others: (2) guest lecturers, such as city planners, discussing how their jobs affect citizen response and the quality of living: and (3) exercises designed to give students opportunities to apply concepts and principles of rhetoric to the visual environment. The paper also contains sample analyses that apply I. A. Richards's theories to J. Miro's painting "Blue II," Burke's theories to a fast food restaurant, and Weaver's theories to a strip of Virginia Beach, Virginia. (HTH)

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Shared Vis
ons: Art, Architecture, and the Visual Environment

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Shared Visions: Art, Architecture, and the Visual Environment

Ours is a visual age. The image seems to have taken over the written word as we are confronted more than ever before with visuals in our everyday lives: photographs, posters, pamphlets, billboards, images on television and in film. Because an enormous part of our daily diet consists of visual imagery, courses in rhetoric no longer can ignore it to deal only with the examination and evaluation of verbal discourse. We need to understand how the visual image functions in our society and how it affects us--and the structure and principles of rhetoric can assist us.

Although there are still some rhetorical theorists who do not believe that the visual image is a form of rhetoric, more and more we find agreement that the symbolism of the visual image needs to be studied as much as verbal discourse, that we no longer can confine ourselves to the study of verbal symbols. Burke, for example, has pointed out that symbolicity includes not only talk, but "all other human symbol systems, such as mathematics, music, sculpture, painting, dance, architectural styles, and so on."1 Duncan argues that to study communication in society, we "must study art, for the highest (because most complete) incorporation of natural forces and operations in experience is found in art."2 And Ehninger, discussing the enlarged scope of rhetoric that has emerged in recent years, proposes as a contemporary definition of rhetoric "the rationale of symbolic inducement; as that discipline which studies all of the ways in which men may influence each other's thinking and behavior through the strategic use of symbols." Appropriate subject matter for rhetoricians to study includes art, architecture, dance, and dress.3 Others are emphasizing the rhetorical nature of art as well. Dewey, for example, sees art as communication; in fact, he believes it is "the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience."4

We may not be accustomed to thinking about art as rhetoric, and it is not often studied as such; these may constitute two major roadblocks to acceptance of art as within the scope of rhetoric. But a definition of art easily becomes extremely rhetorical if it is viewed as the production or arrangement of sounds, colors, forms, movements, and other elements in a manner that affects or evokes a response. And the process by which a visual phenomenon creates a response is similar to that of verbal discourse. A painting, for example, through its specific presentation, creates a particular reality or world, the meaning of which emerges only through interaction between the artist and the viewer.5

As a result of the cooperation between the artist and the viewer, a community of action is established in which both respond in similar ways to the visual symbols. But this cooperation or assent is not automatic, just as it is not for the speaker or writer. The art object may offer a different vision of the world from that held by the viewer, thus creating conflict or division. Through the process of identification, the division between artist, viewer, and art object can be resolved. Such identifica-

tion occurs only insofar as the artist speaks the viewer's language by tonality, order, image, attitude, and idea.6 The artist makes choices in terms of size of canvas, type of paint, method of application, and elements selected to express the reality; all of these choices may or may not induce the audience to accept the artist's particular vision of the world. If the work does not provide means of identification for the viewer with the artist and the reality, then the artist's choices have been inappropriate for the audience, have assumed values or capabilities in the viewer that were not there, or have been directed at another audience. We see, then, a process that is quite similar to that which occurs between speaker and listener, a process familiar to rhetorical theorists and critics.

The syllabus presented here is designed to assist instructors of rhetoric in the generation and development of methods of teaching this rhetoric of the visual image and to become aware of the ways in which visual phenomena can become the focus of a course in rhetorical theory. Such a course might be called "Contemporary Rhetoric and the Visual Environment," "Rhetoric and the Visual Image," "Rhetoric and the Visual Arts," "The Visual Image as Rhetoric," or simply "Contemporary Rhetoric."

Purpose of the Course

The course is designed primarily to teach theories of contemporary rhetorical theory through visual elements--whether these are found in the visual arts such as drawing, painting, and sculpture; architecture and interior design; or the larger visual environment of malls, parks, public squares, parking lots, streets, neighborhoods, and cities. It focuses on the theories of individuals such as Chaim Perelman, Kenneth Burke, Richard Weaver, Stephen Toulmin, Erving Goffman, Marshall McLuhan, and I. A. Richards, although the methods and exercises proposed here could apply as well to studies of classical theories of rhetoric. The purpose of the course is twofold. First, it is designed to help students learn to think rhetorically--that is, to approach their visual environment from a rhetorical perspective. Hopefully, it will increase their awareness of how visual phenomena affect them and will decrease their tolerance for those elements that they decide cause them to respond in negative or unproductive ways. Second, the course is designed to make students feel more comfortable about viewing and evaluating their visual environment. The exposure of many college students to visual literacy consists of an art history or studio course, neither of which teaches ways of looking and understanding one's response to visual experiences. While this course certainly will not deal in any detail with theories of art and the process of art criticism, it will provide students with some confidence as they learn to approach a visual phenomenon using specific concepts and methods that have been tried and tested over centuries of the rhetorical tradition.

Format of the Course

The course is divided into three units. In the first unit, the in-

structor will lecture on contemporary theories of rhetoric as offered by Burke, Weaver, Toulmin, Perelman, McLuhan, Goffman, Richards, and others. Students, of course, will read various works by these theorists to become acquainted with their basic ideas about rhetoric.

In the second unit, guest lecturers (perhaps arranged for by the students themselves) will discuss the rhetorical aspects of visual elements in their practical application. These speakers might include a city planner, an arts administrator, an architect, an artist, and an interior designer, each speaking on how the decisions they make in their work result in certain kinds of responses in their audience. For example, the city planner might discuss zoning, transportation systems, the development of parks, and the design of streets and how these affect the quality of living in and responses to a city. The director of an art museum might speak about how exhibitions are selected and hung, how shows are juried, and how these decisions affect the patrons of the museum and the community at large. An interior designer might tell how he or she makes choices as to color, design, style, and form in a home or office so that they are appropriate to the residents or users. Although these individuals may not speak explicitly in rhetorical terms, much of what they do is rhetorical, and the students should gain some idea of the rhetorical nature of visual concerns with which these individuals deal.

In the third unit, the students themselves will have opportunities to apply concepts and principles of contemporary rhetoric to the visual environment. Students select for study some visual phenomenon--such as a painting, a sculpture, a car, a building, a park, or a city--and analyze it using some aspect of contemporary rhetorical theory--perhaps Burke's notion of perspective by incongruity or Weaver's distinction between rhetoric and dialectic. These analyses are shared with other class members to encourage thinking about and discussion of all kinds of visual elements in rhetorical terms.

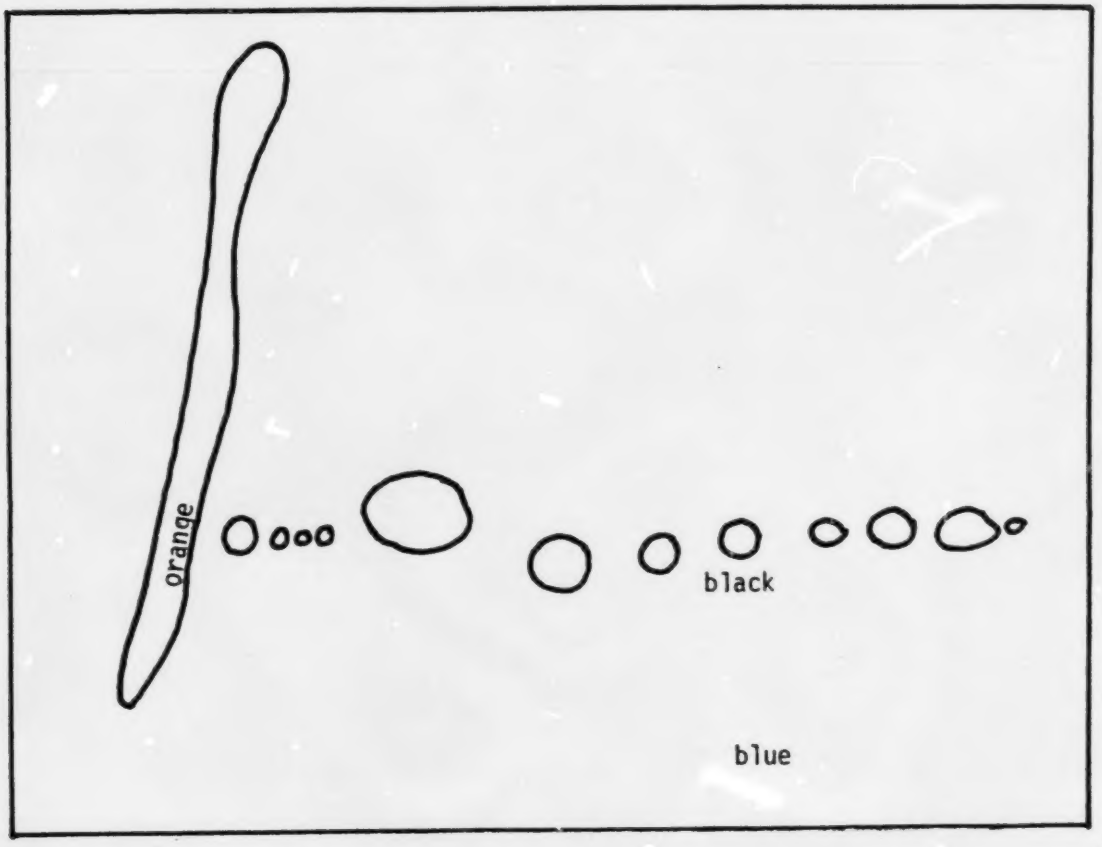
Sample Analyses

The brief review of the justification for and format of the course hopefully has given the prospective instructor a basic idea of the way in which visual phenomena can be used to teach contemporary rhetorical theory. Sample analyses of the way in which contemporary rhetorical theory can be applied to various visual aspects of the environment might further clarify the procedure and give the instructor greater confidence in the teaching of such a course. To illustrate the application of contemporary rhetorical theory to visual phenomena, I will show how the concepts of three rhetorical theorists can be used to analyze three visual images. The ideas of I. A. Richards will be used to analyze Joan Miró's painting, Blue II; Kenneth Burke's notions will be applied to a Burger King restaurant; and Richard Weaver's concepts will provide the basis for an analysis of the ocean-front strip of Virginia Beach, Virginia. There is no particular relationship between the theorists and the visual phenomena selected for analysis. Burke's ideas, for example, easily could have been used as the basis for an exami-

nation of an art object or an environment and need not be restricted to examining architecture and interior design.

An Analysis of Blue II According to Richards

To illustrate how I. A. Richards' notions about rhetoric can be taught through the use of works of visual art, I have selected for analysis a painting by Joan Miró. Born in 1893 in Spain, Miró's early art showed the influence of various movements in European painting; he soon developed his own style, however, rooted in Spanish music, architecture, and festivals characterized by color and fantasy. He is not only a painter but also has created ceramics, prints, and sculpture. Blue II was completed in 1961 and is now part of the collection of the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York City. It is oil on canvas, approximately nine feet by eleven feet, and consists of an aqua blue background with a long, vertical orange rod at the left of the painting and a series of black oval shapes creeping horizontally to the right of the rod. The following suggests the basic form of the painting:



Richards' ideas about rhetoric, although not intended originally to be applied to visual images, offer perhaps a particularly appropriate means of studying abstract art not only because he has been concerned with aesthetics7 but also because his focus in rhetoric is on misunderstanding and its remedies. To study misunderstanding and its remedies, for Richards, is to study meaning as conveyed in symbols. Although he concentrates in his works on the meanings of verbal discourse, his definition of rhetoric as inclusive of all forms of discourse and the tendency of abstract art to create a great deal of misunderstanding lead me to believe that Richards would be interested in eliminating this type of misunderstanding as well as that found in verbal communication.

A chief cause of misunderstanding, Richards says, is the proper meaning superstition, which is the belief that a word has a meaning of its own--ideally, only one--that is independent of its use and the purpose for which it is uttered and that people should recognize, agree about, and stick to it.8 As a result of this superstitution, whenever we hear anything said, we immediately conclude that the speaker is referring to what we would be referring to were we speaking the words ourselves; often, however, the interpretation is incorrect.9 This assumption can be seen operating not only in our use of words, but in the visual arts as well. A typical viewer looking at the Miró painting might be inclined to ask, "What is it supposed to be?" And much of the misunderstanding that the viewer experiences comes from the fact that it has no single meaning--there is no one image or idea that the artist is communicating to the viewer. But the assumption that there is one such image is a common one and continues to lead to confusion about paintings such as this.

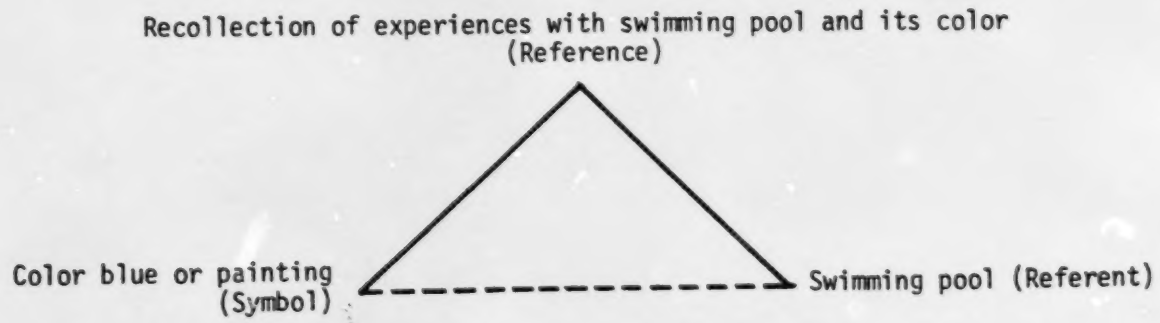
To rebut the proper meaning superstition, Richards offers his own theory of meaning based on the idea that words mean nothing by themselves--they have meaning only when a thinker makes use of them.10 The process he describes can be used to explain how we derive our meanings from paintings or other visual phenomena. His starting point is the idea that humans are responsive to other things, with our responses affected by our past experiences. In other words, we respond to a stimulus in a way that is influenced by the other things that happened to us when more or less similar stimuli struck us in the past.11 When we look at Blue II, then, our perception is influenced not only by the present circumstances, but also by our past experiences with art and abstract art in particular, the colors in the painting, the shapes and forms in the painting, our acquaintance with the works of Miró, and perhaps even with our past experiences in art galleries and in New York City. Thus, one viewer might feel bewilderment because of little exposure to and understanding of abstract art, while another might respond positively to the painting because the dominant blue color reminds her of a swimming pool, summer, or the sky. A fisherman, on the other hand, might see the oval black forms as rocks in a river and be pleasantly reminded of past fishing trips. Any past experience that is called up by the painting will affect the beholder's response to it.

The role these past experiences play in meaning becomes more explicit as Richards develops his concept of context. He defines context as a

whole cluster of events that recur together, a set of things or events or entities related in a certain way,12 and because of context, a sign or symbol is able to function. Signs are former components of a context that once affected us as a whole, and even when only part of the context appears, that part affects us as though the whole context were present. For example, dark skies, thunder, lightning, and rain may once have constituted a context. Following this experience, if thunder is heard, it affects us as though the rest of the context were present--that is, we interpret the thunder as a sign of rain and thus act accordingly by carrying an umbrella. So our interpretation of a sign is our reaction to it as determined by past experiences in similar situations as well as by our present experience. For Richards, then, meaning becomes context. Symbols derive meaning through belonging to a recurrent group of events and serving as substitutes exerting the powers of what is not there. What a word means is the missing parts of the context.13

To see how this process of meaning operates in the visual arts, let's return to the viewer of Blue II who was reminded of a swimming pool by the rectangular space of the blue color that dominates the painting. The whole context of the swimming pool image might include a hot summer day, the coolness of the water, sharing fun with friends, vacation, cold beer, getting a sun tan, the smell of sun-tan lotion, children learning to swim in the shallow end of the pool, going off the high diving board for the first time, chlorine in the eyes, a yellow beach towel, wet cement beneath the feet, and feelings of relaxation and contentment. Upon viewing Blue II, the blue color in the painting acts for the beholder as a sign of this entire context, and the painting affects her as though the whole context were present. The painting for this particular viewer "means" the missing parts of that context, and she is likely to leave the painting with a pleasant feeling about it--even though she may not realize consciously that the meaning of the painting for her is coming from that specific context.

Richards' semantic triangle, of course, clarifies the relationship between the symbol, the mental processes, and the actual object or referent in this process of the acquisition of meaning. At the three points of the triangle, Richards places "symbol," "referent," and "reference" or thought. For our viewer, the color blue or the painting as a whole would be the symbol, the swimming pool is the referent, and the recollections of the experiences with the swimming pool and its color are the reference.



Between the vie
painting), causal relater's thoughts and the symbol (the color blue or the
of reference--that is, ions hold. The symbol causes her to perform an act
there. Between these to think about the swimming pool and her experiences
there is also a relatiohought processes and the referent (the swimming pool),
about the object that i that is more or less direct--the viewer thinks
referent there is no di the swimming pool. But between the symbol and the
that the painting will ect connection, which accounts for the likelihood
of each person who sees create different responses in the thought processes
development of the thou it. So experience plays an important role in the
tween symbol and refere ht which in turn influences the relationship be-
t.

Other notions t
could be applied and stat are involved in Richards' theories of rhetoric
distinction between emodied in terms of a painting such as Blue II. His
hending,15 and his desc ive and symbolic language,14 his model of compre-
example, all would enab ription of the various functions of language,16 for
to become skilled at se e the student to learn more about his theories and
eing them in operation throughout the visual world.

A Burkean Analysis of a
Burger King Restaurant

Both the exteri
as subject matter for or design and interior spaces of buildings can serve
unique buildings such a etorical analysis. In cities that contain famous,
heim Museum in New York the John Hancock building in Chicago, the Guggen-
students will have acce City, or the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.,
do not have access to ts to dramatic examples for study. But those who
ory to study the buildi ese types of buildings still can use rhetorical the-
sis, I have selected fo gs around them. To illustrate this type of analy-
cated on the corner of study a typical Burger King restaurant that is lo-
21st Street and Colley Avenue in Norfolk, Virginia.

From the outsid
building with a mansard of the Burger King, the customer sees a square
the building and allow shake roof. Glass windows dominate the front of
side. A very large sign e to see the line of customers while still out-
between two halves of a with the Burger King logo of the words "Burger King"
a split-rail fence that hamburger bun towers over a small yard enclosed by
parking lot is adjacent contains grass, shrubs, and two small trees. A
to one side of the building.

Inside, the res
on the floor, plastic p aurant features linoleum designed to look like brick
spersed with mirrors, a neling on the walls made to look like wood and inter-
in autumn. On the ceil d two large photographic wallpaper murals of trees
with a design of tree b ng are square, flat, plastic light covers decorated
formica designed to lo anches and autumn leaves. The table surfaces are
an imitation wood grain like wood grain, and red plastic chairs--again with
area is divided in two --are attached to them with metal bars. The seating
red, orange, and yellow with a screen topped by plastic geometric shapes in
restaurant. The counte These colors are emphasized throughout the entire
top at which orders are placed is yellow, with red,

orange, and maroon stripes running down the front. The employees wear uniforms and hats with brown, yellow, and red stripes. Only the manager does not wear a uniform; he wears dress slacks, a short-sleeved shirt, and a tie. Instrumental music plays continuously, and air conditioning keeps the restaurant almost cold.

Customers order from a lighted sign that contains the list of items available as well as photographs of a beefsteak sandwich, a boy drinking a milk shake, and an envelope of french fries. One employee stands at the cash register taking customers' orders, while the other employees prepare and bring the food as she requests it over a microphone. Behind the counter, the customer can see the back of the stainless steel grill, stainless steel work areas where employees wrap food, and stainless steel beverage machines. Customers are given their items on trays that are stacked next to the cash register, go to the dining area to eat, and then deposit their trash in one of the many containers marked "THANK YOU."

One possible way to approach the Burger King restaurant using Burke's notions of rhetoric is to examine it in terms of form. Form, for Burke, is an arousing and fulfillment of desires, and form generally can be classified as one of five major types: conventional, repetitive, qualitative progression, syllogistic progression, and minor.17 Conventional form involves the appeal of form for form, exemplified in the peroration in classical oratory. In such a case, the appeal of the form already exists in the minds of the audience. Conventional form is violated when, for example, there is no peroration in a classical speech or when someone does not shake hands when introduced to someone. Because all Burger King restaurants are essentially alike, conventional form operates as customers enter the restaurant expecting a certain form that is efficient, clean, has a certain atmosphere, and offers certain types of food. And this conventional form is not violated here. If you were to enter the Burger King, on the other hand, and find available a variety of flavors of yogurt, different salads, steak or chicken dinners with a choice of vegetables, mixed drinks, beer and wine, and a candlelight setting with real wood paneling and linen tablecloths, conventional form would be violated.18

Repetitive form is the consistent maintenance of a principle under new guises, or a restatement of the same thing in different ways. In a speech, this type takes the form of a "string of pearls" approach, in which different examples are strung together to emphasize the same point. Repetitive form is evident at the Burger King in that many diverse elements make the same point: this is an eating establishment that is clean and fast. The omnipresent plastic--in the chairs, tables, floors, walls, trash containers, salt and pepper shakers, and across the high-chair tables--signals that this place is clean since all of these literally can be hosed down or at least easily cleaned. No wood has to be repainted, sanded, or varnished. No bricks have to be replaced when they crumble, no silverware has to be polished, no plates have to be washed, and no floors have to be waxed. Even the encouragement to pick up one's own trash after the meal (the result of "THANK YOU" on the trash containers) signals that this is to be a clean place.

The restaurant is efficient as a result of the easy care and maintenance required, as well as through the food-serving processes that have been established. The woman taking orders asks, "Can I help you?" immediately after finishing with the previous customer. Any lack of attention or hesitation on the part of the customer is met with irritation. Many items are ready to go even before a customer orders them. Hamburgers are waiting under lights in wrappers or boxes, for example, and the employees simply grab them and put them on the tray next to the cash register as they are ordered. The use of the microphone to call out what has been ordered means that the woman at the cash register does not have to step away from the register to transmit the order or fill it. Even the high chairs have wheels on them as if to communicate that they can be placed quickly at a table as needed.

Progressive form consists of two kinds, syllogistic and qualitative. Syllogistic form is the form of a perfectly-conducted argument in which the premises force the conclusion. Given the various aspects of the Burger King that are visible to the customer--the omnipresent logo with the hamburger on it, limited food choices, plastic physical surroundings, efficiency in the taking and filling of orders, and economical prices--one does not expect gourmet, unusual food served in an interesting and attractive manner. The premises (Burke, I'm sure, would appreciate the pun) force the conclusion that the food eaten there may be tasty enough, but it will be prepared and packaged with economy, efficiency, and uniformity in mind. Taste, in this case, may not be as important as these other qualities, just as a syllogism is not particularly valuable in real life for its content--it's the form that is most important.

Qualitative progression, which lacks the pronounced anticipatory nature of syllogistic form, puts one in a state of mind from which another state can appropriately follow. The Burger King, of course, does this. The visible aspects of the restaurant put the customer in a state of mind in which the types of food that are served become acceptable. The same food served in a different environment would not be acceptable at all. Thus we find that form in a Burger King operates as Burke argues that it does: one part of the restaurant leads the customer to anticipate another part of it, the customer is gratified by the sequence, and this results in identification with the restaurant.

Burke's notion of style also is important in a consideration of identification. Style is considered by Burke to be a form of ingratiation; it is an attempt to gain favor by "saying the right thing."19 Anything within the act that creates identification falls under Burke's definition of style. In the Burger King, identification is created through conformity to other Burger Kings and fast-food restaurants similar to it as well as to the cultural values of progress, technology, efficiency, cleanliness, order, conformity, and accumulation of things as evidence of status. For example, to conform to the cultural values of progress and technology, Burger King features expanses of steel, microphones to communicate with people only a few feet away, modern plastics, air conditioning, recorded music, and a large parking lot for cars. Our society is fast-paced and efficient; so is

the Burger King with its focus on getting people in and out as quickly as possible.

Order also is important in our society--we like objects, people, and ideas to be in their proper places, and we generally don't like to deal with the non-routine, the displaced, or the disruptive. Burger King's style adheres to this norm in the uniforms of the lower-level employees which place them all as equals in a category that is different from that of the higher-status manager, reflecting our preference for hierarchical arrangements. The term "king" in the name reinforces our respect for this type of order--a king is on the top of the hierarchy of status. The consistency of the food, the specific systems established to prepare food and take orders, and chairs and booths that cannot be moved around to create more flexible or usable seating systems to meet the demands of various individuals also assert that this is indeed an orderly place.

We see a belief in the accumulation of things in the term given to one of the items on the menu: "the Whopper." This is supposed to be the top-of-the-line item, but its name suggests not quality but quantity. The double and triple wrappings of most foods also function to make the customer think more is being given for one's money--in a sense, a stop at Burger King allows one to accumulate. Burger King, then, establishes mutual ingratiation by saying the right things--the things that people in our society generally have agreed to be the most highly valued.

Just as Burke's notions of form and style can be seen operating in the Burger King, his specific methods of criticism can be applied to the restaurant, although, of course, considerations of form and style are essential in many of these methods. Let's take as an example of Burke's critical methods the agon analysis, which attempts to answer the question, "what versus what?" Using this technique, the critic searches for dramatic alignments or conflict between agents and counter-agents on the assumption that since the motive for communication is always some aspect of division, there would appear to exist in every communicative experience some conflict between characters, terms, or ideas that must be resolved. In agon analysis, the critic attempts to locate this conflict and thus gain insights into the guilt being expunged or the transformations that occur as the result of the conflict.

Examples of conflicting ideas and images are abundant at the Burger King. Each plastic cup is imprinted with the words, "Dispose Properly · Please Help Keep Our Environment Clean," and trash containers are omnipresent that spell out "THANK YOU." These two elements alone might lead the customer to believe that Burger King is committed to environmental concerns. But in opposition, the customer finds that all food served at the Burger King is wrapped and wrapped and wrapped. Hamburgers are wrapped in paper and cartons and then placed in paper bags, all of which are thrown away after being used for possibly ten minutes. Many trees go into the making of paper products for Burger King, which is in direct opposition to the printed messages on the paper products and trash cans. That the owners, managers, and designers of Burger King possibly feel some guilt as a result

might be inferred from the fact that the trash that is put into the containers is not visible--customers are not allowed to see the amount of paper that is wasted hourly and daily.

Another opposition evident at Burger King is between nature and artificiality. On the one hand, there are photographic wallpaper scenes of a forest in autumn; a split-rail wood fence; and bushes, grass, and trees surrounding the exterior of the building, all of which might indicate an affinity for nature and natural materials. But these are opposed by the fake wood grains in the chairs, on the tables, and on the walls as well as by the lights featuring fake trees, all of which mock nature in their obvious cheap imitations. Again, guilt at participation in the destruction of the environment may have caused an attempt to identify with nature through photographs of it and in the incorporation of some natural elements in the exterior landscaping of the building.

Burger King's logo and name featuring the hamburger and its recent introduction of new sandwich items to the menu provides additional conflict in the restaurant. Whereas Burger King for several years sold only hamburgers, it now serves chicken, ham and cheese, and fish fillet sandwiches as well, making its name and logo somewhat misleading and inappropriate. Why did Burger King decide to introduce these new sandwich items when hamburgers seemed sufficient for several years? One answer might be that it simply followed the lead of McDonald's, which introduced these varieties earlier. Another answer might be, however, that these new items are again an attempt to expunge guilt and thus to change identity: aware that it severely limits the options available to its customers and that the foods it serves are not high in nutritional content and quality, Burger King feels compelled to expand the menu to offer more freedom and more varied nutrients for its customers.

Another conflict is apparent at Burger King. For several years, its primary advertising slogan was, "Have it your way," the implication being that Burger King is interested in meeting the individual's needs, not in treating customers as one in a mass. This slogan contrasts directly with the overall treatment of the customers by the employees. The woman taking the orders at the cash register did not seem at all concerned with the needs and wants of individual customers. She clearly was unhappy if they needed a minute or two to peruse the selections and make a decision as to what to order. She asked every customer, "Can I help you?" in an irritated tone of voice immediately upon finishing with the previous customer and became very impatient if the customer did not respond immediately. This apparent lack of concern for the customer may have instigated a transformation such as the one Burke discusses. The slogan, "Have it your way," was dropped perhaps because the management knew the entire Burger King system is predicated on efficiency, not on meeting individual needs; therefore, the "lie" should not be encouraged or perpetrated.20

Just as agon analysis provides some possible insights into conflicts at the Burger King and possible reasons for changes in its advertising and environmental decor, other insights could be gained using other Burkean

methods of criticism such as cluster analysis, pentadic analysis, or essentializing. Whatever the concepts or methods used as the basis for this type of analysis, the results should reveal new knowledge and perspectives about our responses to buildings.

Cruising the Strip with Richard Weaver

The application of contemporary principles of rhetoric need not be confined to traditional visual arts forms such as painting, architecture, or interior design. Students might want to look at more expanded visual aspects of their world--entire environments such as parks, streets, neighborhoods, or cities. To illustrate how Richard Weaver's ideas about rhetoric can be used to analyze these larger environments, I will take as an example of such an environment the resort strip of the city of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Virginia Beach, with a population of 250,000, is a resort city located on the Atlantic coast between Norfolk, Virginia, and the North Carolina border. It calls itself the largest resort city in the world since it annexed its county a few years ago. The result was a land mass for the city that is 35 miles long by 25 miles wide. Tourists rarely go beyond the ocean-front strip, however, which includes hotels, fast-food restaurants, T-shirt shops, souvenir shops, discos, and miniature golf courses built along the beach on what used to be sand dunes. A concrete boardwalk runs along the beach throughout the strip, separating hotels and motels from the sand. Traffic on the streets in and around the strip is very heavy during the tourist season, and cars barely move as drivers circle the blocks in search of parking places or to gawk at scantily-clad men and women walking the sidewalks and beach. On the beach itself, which is quickly disappearing because the natural barriers once formed by the dunes no longer keep the sand from eroding, individuals reeking of sun-tan lotion lie a few inches apart from each other, covering every available spot of sand.

We might begin an analysis of Virginia Beach's strip with Weaver's basic notion that language or symbols are symbolic. We no sooner have uttered words or built a building or created an environment than we have given impulse to other people to look at the world, or some part of it, in a certain way.21 This attitude implies an act, making all rhetoric a rhetoric of motives since in its utterance there is a will to alter something.

A walk through the strip at Virginia Beach indicates that indeed, a specific attitude and specific actions are encouraged and exhibited by the tourists there. Primarily, they are supposed to spend money. The visual environment tells you this at a glance. Only places where one can consume exist along the strip. Trees, grass, and flowers don't exist largely because they would take up space that could be used to extract money from the tourists. Prices of all of the commodities sold on the strip are very high. Rates at hotels and motels increase drastically during the tourist season, for example, and beverage vending machines along the strip sell a coke for 50¢ that costs 30¢ or 35¢ off the strip.

A second attitude that the strip conveys is that it does not care about the natural environment. Mass transit is virtually non-existent--parking lots and meters abound for cars. Sand dunes were destroyed in order to build the strip. There is no foliage to maintain the natural flow of oxygen and carbon monoxide or to provide beauty, despite the fact that plants and trees grow lushly and readily in the geographic area. Plastic, artificial materials are everywhere--from restaurant interiors to the large-scale hippopotamuses, giraffes, and King Kings that loom above the miniature golf courses. The statement that is made about the environment urges actions appropriate to a lack of concern for life in nature: lie on the beach, dance all night, consume junk food, ogle and pick up women (or men), and get drunk.

Just as Weaver believed that rhetoric is sermonic in that it exhibits an attitude and encourages certain acts, he believed that there is a proper ordering of the goods in a culture. There is a hierarchy of terms capable of moving individuals to action with some ultimate source on the top. He asserted that the major goal of an ethical rhetoric must be to maintain these ultimate terms and thus to maintain proper values.22 As a starting point to analyze this hierarchy, Weaver formulated the notion of god and devil terms. God terms are expressions to which all other expressions are subordinate and less powerful. Their force imparts to the others their lesser degree of force and fixes the scale by which degrees of comparison are understood. The counterpart of the god term is the devil term, the enemy that people will work to keep out of the culture.23

A discovery of the god and devil terms operating in the Virginia Beach strip offers some interesting insights into its environment. God terms evident include "youth," "shiny" or "flashy," "sensuality," "physical," "tan," "freedom," "play," "excitement," "relaxation," and "sun." The strip communicates to visitors that this is the place to forget the routines of work, a place to play and relax and leave old inhibitions behind. To make it in this environment, the individual must be tan, sexy, young, and possess flashy clothing and car. Devil terms include "old age," "dullness," "intellect," "pale," "restraint" (which includes institutional restraints such as "church" and "school"), "work," "boredom," "rain," and "cold." In other words, anything that inhibits the carefree pursuit of sun, sex, and glitter becomes evil, and many of the ideas that would be god terms in the individual's home environment (such as "work" and "intellect") are shelved and temporarily forgotten at the Beach. The normal hierarchy of terms in the home environment is inverted, and the terms that are highly regarded and sanctioned at home become despised on the strip. Weaver, of course, would urge that all tourists at the strip hold a private dialectic to examine the terms present in the rhetoric there--and thus prevent themselves from becoming creatures of evil public forces and victims of their own thoughtless rhetoric.

Again, this has been merely a sample of the kinds of analyses and insights that Weaver's theories of rhetoric could provide when applied to a portion of a city. Such an analysis could be carried further by looking at the strip in the context of, for example, Weaver's types of argument,24

his notion of los
about noble rhetor of memory or historical consciousness,[25] or his ideas
c.26

Resources

Many resou
that the instructo ces are available both on contemporary rhetoric and art
Because instructors will find useful in preparing for a course such as this.
ing with contempor of rhetoric are likely to be familiar with works deal-
of works dealing w ry rhetoric, the following bibliography is composed only
this area are not th art and the visual environment since resources in
essentially a rhet likely to be as familiar. The works listed here all take
specifically with rical view toward art and were selected for inclusion
his perspective in mind.

Alexander, Christo
University her. The Timeless Way of Building. New York: Oxford
Presentati Press, 1979.
ning that n of a new theory of architecture, building, and plan-
taking pla mphasizes the quality that results from living patterns
language a e within buildings and cities. Introduces the pattern
any act of proach to architecture by which an individual may create
building.

Alexander, Christo
Ingrid Fik her, Sara Ishikawa, Murray Silverstein, Max Jacobson,
York: Oxf dahl-King, and Shlomo Angel. A Pattern Language. New
The second rd University Press, 1977.
architectu book in the series about the pattern language method of
language t e and planning that provides the patterns or units of
cific, as at answer design problems. These patterns are very spe-
should a bi How high should a window sill be?" "How many stories
be devoted ilding have? "How much space in a neighborhood should
allowing a to grass and trees?" More than 250 patterns are given,
an eye to y lay person to design any part of an environment with
he effects of that design.

Alexander, Christo
Denny Abra her, Murray Silverstein, Shlomo Angel, Sara Iskikawa, and
Press, 197 s. The Oregon Experiment. New York: Oxford University
The third i
is the mas ook in the series ab t the pattern language method, this
Oregon in er plan that is being implemented at the University of
tern langu gene, Oregon. It describes in full detail how the pat-
community ge approach is being implemented there, with an entire
sign of thi 15,000 persons taking charge of all planning and de-
campus.

Baldinger, Wallace
ston, 1960 S. The Visual Arts. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Win-
A guide to
cluding in the basic elements and principles of the visual arts, in-
ustrial design and the crafts, architecture, sculpture,

photography, film, print making, and painting.

Berleant, Arnold. The Aesthetic Field: A Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1970.

A concise review of basic theories of art including the imitation, emotionalist, expressionist, communication, and formalist theories. It also includes a model for an aesthetic field theory of art that overcomes many of the problems of former theories.

Dewey, John. Art as Experience. New York: Capricorn, 1958.

Based on a series of lectures given at Harvard University in 1931 on the philosophy of art, this book discusses the formal structures and characteristic effects of the arts, including expression, form, substance, and perception.

Dondis, Donis A. A Primer of Visual Literacy. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1973.

Beginning with the assumption that visual as well as verbal literacy means sharing the assigned meaning of a common body of information, Dondis sets out to construct a basic system for learning, recognizing, making, and understanding visual messages that are negotiable by all people, not just those specially trained, such as the designer or the artist. It includes a discussion of topics such as perception, attraction and grouping, positive and negative, tone, dimension, abstraction, scale, and style and contains diagrams and exercises to assist in the development of visual literacy.

Huxtable, Ada Louise. Kicked a Building Lately? New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1976.

A collection of critiques of buildings and cities including the Kennedy Center, the Hirshorn Museum, New York, Boston, Washington, and Philadelphia.

Stolnitz, Jerome. Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

An introductory text to aesthetics that includes discussions of the aesthetic experience; theories of art; the structure of art; issues in aesthetics such as ugliness, truth, and morality; and the evaluation of art.

Langer, Susanne K. Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

The sequel to Philosophy in a New Key, in which Langer takes her theory of symbolism and formulates it into a systematic, comprehensive theory of art, applying it in turn to painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance, drama, and film.

Langer, Susanne K. Philosophy in a New Key. New York: The New American Library, 1942.

In this work, Langer argues that the human brain is constantly carrying on a process of symbolic transformation of experience as a basic human need. This concept of symbolic transformation of experience strikes a new key in philosophy, and the topics discussed include the logic of signs and symbols; what constitutes meaning; what characterizes symbols as the basis for her elaboration of the significance of language, ritual, myth, and music; and the integration of all these elements into human mentality.

Rasmussen, Steen Eiler. Experiencing Architecture. Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1959.

Beginning with the premise that an architect is a theatrical producer who plans the setting for our lives and creates innumerable circumstances as a result of the way he or she arranges the setting, Rasmussen attempts to explain the elements with which the architect works. Included are solids and cavities, scale and proportion, rhythm, textural effects, daylight, color, and hearing.

Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1972.

Deals with symbolism in architecture, particularly that evident in the Las Vegas strip. Topics covered include the architecture of persuasion, architecture as symbol, system and order, permanence and change, lighting, monumentality, styles, and signs.

With the scope of rhetoric generally recognized as much wider than simply written or spoken discourse, rhetorical principles and concepts applied to visual phenomena as described in this syllabus hopefully will enable students to gain new insights into both rhetoric and the visual environment as well as to make the relevance of rhetoric strikingly clear. Through instruction and study of this kind, perhaps we will discover new perspectives about how communication functions in its entirety as we share visions with those who study and work in visual as well as verbal modes.

Notes

[1] Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 28.

[2] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Bedminster Press, 1962), p. 56.

[3] Douglas Ehninger, ed., Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader's Coursebook (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1972), p. 3.

[4] John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Capricorn Books, 1934), p. 105.

[5] At this point some are certain to assert that the artist does not need an external audience, that the artist may not want to show a painting to anyone. This view ignores the fact that the artist is his or her own audience. Because a work of art has a life of its own apart from the artist, the artist is subject to the same processes of communication and interaction with the work as is the viewer. As Kaelin explains, "the artist learns as much from his work as does his audience. The artist is his first appreciator . . . the first one surprised to discover 'his' idea." Eugene F. Kaelin, Art and Existence: A Phenomenological Aesthetics (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1970), p. 38.

[6] This, of course, is Burke's notion of identification. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), pp. 45-46.

[7] Richards has co-authored, for example, a work on aesthetics, in which the different theories of beauty are delineated. I. A. Richards, C. K. Ogden, and James Wood, The Foundations of Aesthetics (1922; rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1974).

[8] I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 11, 72.

[9] C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), p. 15.

[10] Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, p. 10.

[11] Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, pp. 29-31.

[12] Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p. 34. Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, p. 58.

[13] Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, p. 175. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p. 34.

[14] illegible

[15] I. A. Richards, Speculative Instruments (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 22-23.

[16] Richards, Speculative Instruments, pp. 26-27.

[17] Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (Los Altos, California: Hermes, 1953), pp. 124-26.

[18] Conventional form was violated at this particular Burger King on June 25, 1980, when between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., it featured candlelight dining. A hostess in a long dress met customers at the door and escorted them to tables covered with white cloths; a candle burned at the center of each table. Waitresses--also in long dresses--took customers' orders from menus at the table and brought the food ordered to them. A violinist played music at the back of the restaurant.

[19] Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose (Los Altos, California: Hermes, 1954), p. 50.

[20] That Burger King officially has abandoned its policy of building hamburgers to suit the customer is confirmed in Lee Smith, "Burger King Puts Down its Dukes," Fortune, June 16, 1980, pp. 90-94.

[21] Richard M. Weaver, Language is Sermonic (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 224.

[22] Weaver, Language is Sermonic, pp. 86-87.

[23] Weaver, Language is Sermonic, p. 89.

[24] Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953), pp. 55-115.

[25] Richard M. Weaver, Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), pp. 40-54.

[26] Weaver, Language is Sermonic, pp. 57-83.